



Lourdes Pilgrimage in Christianity



What is a Pilgrimage?

A Pilgrimage is a place that people travel to pray as part of their religion.

Lourdes

Lourdes is near the Pyrenees mountains in France.



Pyrenees Mountains.



The story behind why people go on the Pilgrimage to Lourdes...

Long, long ago, there lived a girl called Bernadette Soubirous. Her family was poor and had to share one cold room. The only way to keep warm was to burn sticks which the children had to collect. So one winters day she went out looking for sticks far from home and she went into a small cave (known as a Grotto). Suddenly, she saw Mary appear, the mother of Jesus, wearing a white dress. She had a yellow rose on each foot. She smiled at Bernadette and disappeared.

Bernadette ran home as fast as she could and told her mother about Mary, the beautiful lady she saw. Her mother got angry and told her it was all nonsense. Bernadette begged her mother for 4 days to go back to the cave to see her. Finally her mother said yes.

Bernadette went back to the cave again and again to see Mary and then people in her area became interested in what they were hearing about Mary. One day, 300 people had gathered around the cave when Bernadette went to visit Mary. As before, the beautiful lady appeared to Bernadette but nobody else out of the 300 people could see her. They laughed at her. Mary asked Bernadette to dig a hole in the ground and drink the water.

Bernadette started scratching mud near Mary's feet. As she scratched at the mud, she was amazed to find water, so she did what she was told and drank the muddy water. The people watching were shocked because she was drinking the muddy water. Suddenly, the water turned clean and fresh and started to flow. The people watching were amazed and believed that Bernadette was not lying and actually saw Mary!

Then, Mary told Bernadette that the water was special because it had the ability to help sick people get better and forgave them of bad things they had done in their lives. Mary also asked her to build a chapel (a place of prayer) above the Grotto. The people were very excited when Bernadette told them about the powers of the water and they all spread the news to other people and agreed to build the chapel above the Grotto. After that, many people travelled from far to visit Lourdes.

Bernadette
saw Mary
wearing a
white dress
and had roses
on her feet





Thousands of people go to Lourdes in France every year. Christians go to visit Lourdes because they believe that they will be blessed, cured of any illnesses and be forgiven for the bad things they may have done.



A statue of the lady referred to as 'Our Lady of Lourdes' was built in the place where Bernadette saw Mary. People go to see the statue.



This is the place where Bernadette drank the water from. It is decorated with flowers.



People fill the holy water from the taps in Lourdes into a bottle to take home and drink.



People can also take home holy water from a Cistern (a water tank).

YOUR TASK- On a A4 lined piece of paper, answer these questions in full sentences.

Questions

Which part of the story did you like and why?

Why do you think people did not believe Bernadette?

If you were there would you have believed Bernadette?

Do you think Bernadette was brave to stick up for what she believed in?

Why do you think so many people believed Bernadette even though they didn't see anything?

Why do people visit Lourdes on pilgrimage?

List the reasons why people believe the water is holy.